

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Peter Chiabotti (Reg. No. 54,603) on 10/16/2009.

2. The application has been amended as follows:

In claim 16, delete the phrase "and wherein that an electrically insulating electrode ferrule which surrounds the electrode is snapped onto the shaft tube and holds the electrode in a stop position on the shaft tube".

Allowable Subject Matter

3. Claims 1-16 are allowed.

4. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: Ocel discloses an electrically conductive tube electrically insulated on its outer surface with insulating layer, an electrical connector on the proximal end of the tube which is electrically conductively connected to said tube, a rinse connection on the proximal end of the tube which is in fluid communication with a lumen of the tube and an electrode mounted into the distal end of the tube that features multiple discharge openings in communication with the lumen of the tube, but does not teach that the electrode is

connected detachably with the distal end of the shaft tube and that the electrode is coaxially inserted into the distal end of the shaft tube axially contacting a stop establishing an electrical contact with the shaft tube and an insulating ferrule which surrounds the electrode is snapped onto the shaft tube and holds the electrode in a stop position on the shaft tube. Weber, Jr. et al. disclose an electrically insulating ferrule surrounding an electrode (Fig. 7A&B) that snaps onto the shaft tube but allows the electrode to slide rather than holding it in a stop position. The combination of Ocel and Weber would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention considering this particular difference and also because Weber, Jr. employs a rod-like electrode whereas Ocel does not, thus further preventing combination of the insulating ferrule of Weber, Jr. with the electrode of Ocel. Therefore, the prior art, taken alone or in combination, fail to teach each limitation of the independent claims.

Correspondence

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to BENJAMIN LEE whose telephone number is (571)270-1407. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:00-5:30 M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Linda Dvorak can be reached on (571)-272-4764. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/B. L./ 12/3/2009
Examiner, Art Unit 3739

/Linda C Dvorak/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art
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